



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

no higher evidence of the worth of the human mind, than its capacity of drawing consolation from its own resources under so heavy a privation ; so that it not only can exhibit resignation and cheerfulness, but energy to burst the fetters with which it is encumbered. Who could refuse his sympathy to the success of these efforts,—or withhold from the subject of them the means of attaining his natural level and usefulness in society, from which circumstances, less favorable to him than to ourselves, have hitherto excluded him?

ART. IV.—*Bericht ueber die Versammlung Deutscher Naturforscher und Aerzte in Heidelberg, in September, 1829.*

VON F. TIEDEMANN und L. GMELIN. [Report of the Proceedings at the Meeting of German Naturalists and Physicians at Heidelberg, in September, 1829. By F. TIEDEMANN and L. GMELIN.] Heidelberg. 1829.

Rede, gehalten bei der Eroeffnung der Versammlung Deutscher Naturforscher und Aerzte in Berlin, am 18ten September, 1828. VON ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT. [Address delivered at the opening of the Meeting of German Naturalists and Physicians at Berlin, on the 18th of September, 1828. By ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT.] Berlin. 1828.

Among the most striking characteristics of the present age, are the general facility of communication existing between the nations of the West, the Europeans and their American descendants, and the readiness with which each of them receives from every other, whatever may be usefully applied to its own condition and circumstances. The late wars in Europe brought the people of different countries into closer connexion than before, and thus gave birth among them to feelings of mutual respect ; while, by rendering them weary of military glory, they tended also to awaken a more general fondness for science and the arts of peace. Even England has cast away many of her ancient prejudices, and has become more willing than formerly, to receive instruction from other nations. The Frenchman no longer regards Paris as the only city worthy of the attention of a traveller : the Spaniard begins to be sensible of the absurdity of his foolish pride ; Russia herself will soon be included in

the circle of civilization; and many of the prevailing misconceptions and false opinions respecting the East, are beginning to disappear. The Chinese are no longer looked upon as mere barbarians: we have, in short, discovered, in the language of a common German proverb, that there are men beyond the mountains. The world is daily becoming more enlightened and more just. Before the people of the United States, lies the whole Western continent, spread out like the prospect from the summit of a mountain—vast, animated, and various; and we are enabled, by the unexampled quickness of our communications with other countries, to adopt immediately from them all their valuable and useful improvements. The Latin language, which, in the middle ages, was the only medium of intercourse among men of learning, is now supplanted by several others. Books are published at the same time, in two or three different dialects; and it has become indispensable for every well-educated man, to be familiar with some other, beside his vernacular tongue. We would not be understood to adopt the common opinion, that the progress of civilization has been retarded by the barriers interposed between nations, by the difference of their languages: nor do we consider it as at all unfortunate, that a single language does not universally prevail. On the contrary, we are convinced, that the great variety of the tongues and dialects spoken by her inhabitants, is one of the causes of the superiority which Europe, a small and insignificant portion of the earth, has obtained over the rest of the Eastern hemisphere. Polite literature is divided, not according to countries, but according to languages: and it passes in each through the same gradations, from the earliest efforts of epic and lyric song, to refined description and attic wit; as the nation, which speaks it, passes itself through the various stages of civilization. This remark, however, cannot with justice be applied to the exact sciences, to the literature of the mechanic arts, or to geography. Still, if one language only had been spoken in Europe, our admiration would hardly have been at the same time excited by Camoens, Ercilla, Dante, Ariosto, the Nibelungenlied, and Milton. If the Danes had spoken the same language as the Germans, Denmark could hardly have produced so many distinguished writers in the short interval between Holberg and Oehlenschlaeger. We will even go further, and assert, that the human intellect would not have attained to its present degree of developement in so many

departments, and with so many shades of difference in each, if the ideas of all men had been necessarily expressed in the same idiom. Language and ideas exert a constant and reciprocal influence; and it is one of the principal charms of the study of a new language, that it discloses to us new ideas.

The Association, the title of whose eighth report is placed at the head of this article, appears to us to be one of the most striking effects of the increased facility and desire of communication between different countries. Knowledge is certainly rapidly advancing. We do not accord in opinion with those, who claim for the present age a superiority in every branch of civilization, science and art; and who forget, in their admiration of Fulton, that the application of the paddle-wheel, or even the mere wheel, to the propulsion of vessels, was an improvement as great as his: but we believe, that particular ages have been distinguished by certain peculiar attainments; and that there has been very little, if any, increase of skill in modern times, though the diffusion of it has become more general and rapid. We are of the opinion just indicated, that every remarkable age has applied its ingenuity and activity to some particular department, in which it has excelled preceding and subsequent ones. The favorite studies at the present day are natural philosophy, geography, statistics, and the application of science to the arts; and the zeal and success with which they have been cultivated, cannot be too highly praised.

The Association of German naturalists and physicians is novel, we may say, unique in its character; and it well deserves to be imitated in other countries. It promises, as the reader will hereafter perceive, to be the means of effecting—what is most earnestly to be desired—a scientific union of the German and French nations: and we deem it, therefore, not unimportant to give some account of its character and history.

In a country, in which natural philosophy is so important an object of general pursuit as it is in Germany, and in which so many professors of the healing art are distinguished, as their annual discoveries and publications abundantly prove, for scientific attainments, it was desirable, that men of science should become personally acquainted with each other; in order that they might more readily exchange ideas, aid one another in their respective plans, and communicate more directly and with greater rapidity, information that could not well be conveyed through the medium of printed transactions; that they might, in short, enjoy the

animating and inspiring influence of the *living word*, and consolidate, as far as might be practicable, the union of the great republic of letters. In the address, of which the title is prefixed to this article, Baron Humboldt remarks, that 'the ancients felt the value of the *living word*, the inspiring influence which superior minds exert over others, and the enlightening effect of free and friendly intercourse on the state of opinion and the direction of inquiry.' The character of this Association may be more accurately described, by contrasting it with two institutions of an opposite character. It is not an academy of sciences, the purpose of which is, to aid profound thinkers in pursuing their deep and solitary researches into the recesses of knowledge, and to publish learned transactions. Its immediate object is to produce a general animation, and a rapid interchange of ideas. On the other hand, it bears no resemblance to the schools of the middle ages, with their cold and vain displays of controversial ingenuity. It aims at the discovery of truth by conversation, and not at the exhibition of dialectic skill. As the edifying and happy influence of public religious services is universally acknowledged, while private devotion is also an incumbent Christian duty, so these disciples of science expect and desire to edify one another by their combined, as well as by their separate labors. The union in an actual community of men, whose purposes are the same, and who labor in the same cause of art, science, politics, and religion, but who are scattered over a vast extent of country, cannot fail to have a very salutary effect. It is also the object of this Association, to become acquainted with the various museums, collections, and other treasures of science, in different parts of Germany; and its meetings are held in successive years, at different places, alternately in the northern and southern parts of that country.*

Professor Ludwig Oken† may be considered as the founder

* This Association will doubtless remind the reader of Klopstock's *Republic of the Learned*, though there is, in fact, no real resemblance between them.

† Oken was at one time a professor at the University of Jena; but in 1820, the Duke of Saxe-Weimar was compelled by the Prussian government to dismiss him, on account of his political opinions. He lived for some time at Aargau in Switzerland, and has lately been appointed professor at the University of Munich by King Louis of Bavaria; who does not seem inclined to tread in the footsteps of the Holy Alliance. The article 'Oken,' in the '*Biographie des Contemporains*,' is not, in all respects, accurate.

of this interesting and useful institution. Its origin and character will be best explained by a view of its constitution, of which the following is a translation.

‘§ 1. On the 18th of September, 1822, a number of German naturalists and physicians formed an Association at Leipzig, which bears the name of the *Association of German Naturalists and Physicians*.

‘§ 2. The principal object of the Association is to afford the naturalists and physicians of Germany an opportunity of becoming personally acquainted with one another.

‘§ 3. Every author of a work on natural philosophy or medicine is considered as a member.

‘§ 4. Inaugural dissertations are not regarded as scientific works for this purpose.

‘§ 5. There is no election of members, and no diplomas are given.

‘§ 6. Any person employed in the study of natural philosophy or medicine, is permitted to attend the meetings.

‘§ 7. No absent member has a right to vote.

‘§ 8. All questions are decided by a majority of votes.

‘§ 9. The meetings are held annually with open doors. They begin regularly on the 18th of September, and continue several days.

‘§ 10. The place of meeting is annually changed. At each meeting, the place where the succeeding one is to be held is determined.

‘§ 11. A president (*Geschaefsfuehrer*) and secretary, who must reside at the place of meeting, manage the affairs of the Association until the succeeding meeting.

§ 12. The president fixes the time and place of meeting, and regulates the proceedings. He must, therefore, receive previous information when any paper is proposed to be read.

§ 13. The secretary makes a record of the proceedings, keeps the accounts of the Association and maintains its correspondence.

§ 14. These two officers sign in the name of the Association.

§ 15. They notify the authorities of the place where the next meeting is to be held, and also give public notice of the same.

§ 16. At each meeting, officers are chosen for the next year. If the persons elected decline, the officers make another choice; and may also, if necessary, change the place of meeting.

§ 17. In the event of the death of one officer, the survivor appoints another. If both shall die, the officers of the preceding year resume their offices.

§ 18. The Association makes no assessment, and holds no property, with the exception of its records. Whatever may be exhibited, continues to belong to the exhibiter.

§ 19. The expenses of the meetings are defrayed by the members present.

§ 20. No change can be made in the constitution, until after the first five meetings.

This institution accords so well with the spirit of the age, or at least with the spirit of the Germans in their ardent pursuit of natural science, that its meetings which were held for the four last years at Dresden, Munich, Berlin and Heidelberg, were remarkably brilliant. The meeting at Heidelberg in 1829 was attended by two hundred and seventy-three naturalists and physicians, among whom were individuals from all parts of Germany, and from Switzerland, Poland, Denmark and Tuscany; together with seven from England, nine from France, and five from the Netherlands.

This meeting was rendered particularly interesting by the presence of Baron de Ferussac, director of the '*Société du Bulletin universel pour la propagation des connoissances scientifiques et industrielles*,'* who appeared as the representative of that Association, and for a purpose which will be best explained by the following letter, addressed by him to the president of the Society.

MR. PRESIDENT,

The directors of the *Universal Bulletin* have imposed upon me the duty of presenting myself before the meeting of German savans at Heidelberg, to express their wishes and their hopes.

'The statutes of the Society, and the catalogue of its members, together with the other documents, which I have the honor to present to you, will enable you to form a just idea of its character, and of its means of influence.

'It is the object of that Association, which was instituted by virtue of a decree of the King of France, issued on the 13th of March, 1828, upon the report of the ministry and the council of state, to establish a permanent connexion, and an active cor-

* The *Bulletin Universel des Sciences et de l'Industrie* is a periodical journal published at Paris, and divided into eight sections, of each of which a number is issued monthly. Baron de Ferussac is the general director. He is assisted by eight editors, one for each section. The sections are arranged as follows. 1. For mathematical, physical and chemical science; 2. natural history and geology; 3. medical science; 4. agriculture, horticulture, fishing, and sporting in general; 5. technology; 6. geography, statistics, political economy, voyages and travels; 7. philology, antiquities and history; 8. military science.—*Encyclopædia Americana*.

respondence between all the friends of science and the useful arts; to the end that the ideas and labors of each may be rendered accessible and useful to all; for without this the progress of all must of necessity be slow, and valuable results far less rapidly effected.

‘This Association, which is peculiarly distinguished by its universal character, belongs exclusively to no one nation, to no single school, to no particular doctrine. It professes to labor for the *public good*. The most eminent friends of science in every country are invited to become its members. They must in every state constitute a committee for the encouragement of science, and for facilitating the labor and researches of scientific men. They must form together the Senate of that general republic of science and industry, which is every day so rapidly increasing with the progress of instruction and the culture of the human mind.

‘The unquestionable importance of such an organization to the interest of science and men of learning, as well as to the progress of civilisation, has induced the association which I have the honor to represent, to believe, that an object so elevated and generous as theirs, will attract the attention of the assembly of learned men, over which you preside.

‘For these reasons, the directors of the *Universal Bulletin* believe, that it belongs to an assembly so remarkable and so solemn as that which is now convened in Heidelberg, to manifest their friendly disposition towards that Institution, by some public act; and I have accordingly been requested, Mr. President, to beg you to cause this letter to be read at one of the earliest meetings of your Association, and to ask that it may be noticed in the report of your proceedings; and if these requests be not disregarded, that it may be made the order of the day for the consideration of the sections.

‘I have also, Mr. President, the honor to enclose six copies of our documents, for the use of the several sections of the assembly.

I am, with high respect, &c.

Heidelberg, Sept. 13th, 1829.

The meeting at Heidelberg was organized in four departments; appropriated respectively to chemistry and natural philosophy, mineralogy and geology, botany, and medicine. A general meeting and a separate meeting of each division were held every day. The session continued seven days: and we are astonished, on examining the report, to perceive how much scientific and practical information was communicated, in so short a space of time. Reports of uncommon medical operations were

made ; delicate chemical preparations were exhibited ; new discoveries promulgated ; new instruments brought into notice ; and a great number of scientific treatises read. Letters were received from learned men in many different parts of Europe, and in short, more activity and zeal were displayed, on this occasion, than upon any former one of the kind. This meeting, however, was inferior in brilliancy to that which was held last year at Berlin, and at which, as we have already mentioned, Baron Alexander Humboldt presided. The short introductory discourse, which he delivered upon that occasion, exhibited the refinement and elegance that belong to this distinguished philosopher, so well known throughout the world for his researches and discoveries, in almost every department of natural science. Having mentioned the name of this great man, we cannot permit the occasion to pass without expressing our admiration of his elevated character—our deep sense of the services which he has rendered to the world by his indefatigable efforts in America, Europe, Africa and more recently in Asia, and our ardent wishes that his valuable life may be long continued for the instruction of both hemispheres.

The meeting at Berlin was rendered, by the taste of Baron Humboldt, as pleasing as it was interesting and useful. Its first session in the hall of the royal musical academy was attended by more than five hundred persons, among whom were some of the highest officers of state. To this succeeded the regular meetings. In the evening, a *conversazione* was given by the President, in the great concert-room of the royal theatre. This saloon, which is one of the most elegant in Europe, was arranged by Mr. Schinkel, the King's architect, as a temple of German Fame. Within a semicircle of rays, opposite to the entrance, the names of the most distinguished German naturalists were inscribed in characters of gold and silver. On one side were placed the following lines of Goethe :

Es soll sich regen, schaffen, handeln,
 Erst sich gestalten, dann verwandeln,
 Nur scheinbar stehts momente still ;
 Das Ew'ge regt sich fort in Allem,
 Denn Alles muss in Nichts zerfallen,
 Wenn es im Seyn beharren will.*

* Motion, action, formation, creation, change, are the laws of existence. Repose is a mere appearance, for the Universe is inspired in all its parts by a principle of constant activity ; and ceasing to change is in other words ceasing to be.

On the other side was inscribed the following passage from Schiller :

Es entbrennen im feurigen Kampf die eifernden Kraefte,
Grosses wirket ihr Streit, Groesseres wirket ihr Bund.*

The King and several of the princes attended this festival : which was rendered still more attractive by a full orchestra and the first singers of the royal theatre. While the meeting continued, the members were every day conveyed in carriages to a vast dining hall, in which were spread twenty tables, at each of which twenty-four persons were accommodated. Baron Humboldt presided at the first table. No ladies were present, excepting the wives or daughters of such members as did not reside in Berlin.

The institution has been conducted with so much success, that it was proposed at the last meeting that the future ones should occasionally be held in other countries, and it was particularly requested by Professor Oersted of Copenhagen, that the next might take place in that city ; but the invitation was declined for the present, principally because the Association had not yet met in several of the German cities, which contain treasures of natural science well worthy of their attention. Hamburg has been assigned as the place of meeting for the next year. We should rejoice if the attendance there of some of our fellow citizens might produce a literary and scientific union between two regions, separated only by an ocean, which is found to oppose no obstacles of importance to our commercial enterprise. Boston, New-York and Philadelphia, are not really more remote from Paris, than Warsaw, Stockholm, Lisbon, and many other European cities. The representatives of the United States would doubtless meet with a hospitable reception, and a cordial welcome from the inhabitants of a country, which was styled by Madame de Staël '*le pays des pensées et de la bonhomie.*'

* The power of conflicting principles is increased by the ardor of contention ; their strife produces much good, but their union still more.